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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 000982

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP (HARRIS) AND EEB/TPP/IPE  
STATE PASS TO USTR FOR JASON BUNTIN

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [EINV](#) [KIPR](#) [SA](#)  
SUBJECT: DEPUTY MINISTER OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION  
REQUESTS SUPPORT FOR IPR ENFORCEMENT AND AWARENESS

REF: A. RIYADH 83  
[B](#). 92 RIYADH 9828

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Deputy Minister of Culture and Information Abdul Rahman Al-Hazza told EconCouns that he wants to develop an action plan for intellectual property rights (IPR) enforcement and awareness with input and sponsorship from the private sector. Hazza hopes to conclude and publish the results of all pending IPR cases currently backlogged in the Violations Review Committee (VRC) within two months. The Ministry of Culture and Information (MOCI) is now responsible for licensing purchases of satellite dishes in the Kingdom. End summary.

ACTION PLAN NEEDED FOR IPR ENFORCEMENT AND AWARENESS  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) Hazza told EconCouns July 20 that he wants to develop an action plan for intellectual property rights (IPR) enforcement and awareness with input and sponsorship from the private sector. The Ministry (MOCI) needs support to fight piracy, particularly to address the shortage of trained inspectors, and Hazza wants the private sector to provide a detailed budget and action plan for hiring inspectors. Hazza recognizes the importance of the Kingdom's upcoming USTR Special 301 Out of Cycle Review, and said the Ministry wants Saudi Arabia removed from the Watch List for its own reasons, not to satisfy Washington.

[1](#)3. (SBU) When asked about an IPR public awareness campaign, Hazza said Microsoft's recent print campaign was weak, and expressed strong support for a more robust print, radio, television, and workshop campaign. The Ministry could ensure media coverage of an IPR workshop or exposition if another entity could plan the event, he said.

DETERMINED TO CONCLUDE AND PUBLISH IPR VIOLATION CASES  
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[1](#)4. (SBU) Hazza said that as head of the Violations Review Committee (VRC), he wants to clear the backlog of IPR violation cases over the next two months (by the end of September). He said the Committee recently had cleared 20 to 30 cases in a two week period. The VRC has two new members, including a "more flexible" law expert, and Hazza plans to publish details on all concluded cases in the newspaper and online by early August. Hazza said the Ministry will start publishing a monthly report on cases to raise IPR awareness, although he admitted his ministry still "needs to work on" the website. No cases have been brought to the Board of Grievances to date, and Hazza said this was partly due to the large backlog of open cases and subsequent inability to try repeat offenders using prior convictions as evidence.

MOCI ISSUES LICENSES FOR SATELLITE DISHES  
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¶5. (SBU) According to Hazza, the Royal Diwan issued a new regulation, effective immediately, which makes MOCI responsible for issuing licenses for all imported satellite dishes. To regulate unauthorized transmission of pay TV and satellite signals, satellite dishes will not be granted customs clearance without a license from MOCI. (Note: This continues a well-known saga going back at least to the early 1990s. See ref B for background.)

MANY HATS, FEW RESOURCES  
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¶6. (SBU) In addition to his role as Deputy Minister for Internal Information, Hazza is the Ministry's spokesperson, the Chairman of the Violations Review Committee (VRC), and a member of Riyadh City Council. The Director General of Copyrights position has not been filled, leaving Hazza as the overall lead on IPR issues as well. Speaking of his ministry, Hazza repeatedly lamented, "We cannot do everything," citing staffing and financial limitations.

¶7. (SBU) Hazza welcomed Econcouns' suggestion that the City Council be mobilized to crack down on IPR violators.

¶8. (SBU) Comment: Although his intentions are good, Hazza has neither the resources nor the time to implement a robust IPR action plan without significant assistance. Post is following up with private sector representatives to organize a roundtable with MOCI to develop a detailed action plan and budget for IPR enforcement and awareness activities. End comment.

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